

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (previously presented) A process for eliminating a polymer that is bound to a protein by a thioester of a mercapto group of a cysteine residue of the protein comprising reacting the protein having the polymer conjugated thereto via a thioester of a mercapto group of a cysteine residue of the protein with a compound having a mercapto group to eliminate the polymer from the cysteine residue.
2. (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the protein conjugated with a polymer is obtained by reacting a protein having a cysteine residue with an activated polymer.
3. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the polymer is polyalkylene oxide.
4. (original) The process according to claim 3, wherein the polymer is polyethylene glycol.
5. (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the compound having a mercapto group is dithiothreitol, dithioerythritol, 2-mercaptoethanol, reduced glutathione or N-acetyl-L-cysteine.
6. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the compound having a mercapto group is dithiothreitol or 2-mercaptoethanol.
7. (original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the protein is an enzyme.
8. (currently amended) The process according to claim 7, wherein the enzyme contains polymer is eliminated from a thioester bond to a cysteine residue in an active center of the enzyme.
9. (original) The process according to claim 8, wherein the enzyme is methioninase, papain or transglutaminase.
10. (currently amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein ~~average~~ 0.7 to 1.3 molecules of the polymer are eliminated per 1 subunit of a protein.
11. (canceled)

12. (previously presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the protein having a polymer that is bound to a protein by a thioester of a mercapto group of a cysteine residue of the protein is a methioninase-polyethylene glycol complex, papain-polyethylene glycol complex or transglutaminase-polyethylene glycol complex.

13. - 15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (new) The process of claim 8, wherein 0.7 to 1.3 molecules of the polymer are eliminated per 1 subunit of a protein.